A TRVE COPY Of The PETITION Of The Gentle-women, & Trades-mens wives In, and about the City of *London*.

Delivered To the Honourable, the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons, assembled In PARLIAMENT, Feb. 4. 1641.

Together with their severall reasons, why their Sex ought thus to Petition, as well as the Men, and the manner how both their Petitions and reasons were delivered.

Likewise the Answer which the Honourable Assembly sent to them by Mr. Pym, as they stood at the House

LONDON,
Printed for J. Wright. 1642.

TO THE

HONOVRABLE KNIGHTS CITIZENS and BVRGESSES, of the House of COMMONS assembled in PARLIAMENT.

The humble Petition of the Gentlewomen, Tradesmens-wives, and many others of the Female Sex, all Inhabitants of the City of LONDON, and the Suburbs thereof.

With lowest submission shewing,

THAT we also with all thankfull humility acknowledging the unwearied paines, care and great charge, besides hazard of health and life, which you the noble worthies of this honourable and renowned Assembly have undergon, for the safety both of Church and Common-wealth, for a long time already past; for which not onely we your humble Petitiones, and all well affected in this Kingdome, but also all other good Christians

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FROM THE LIBRARY
OF F. L. GAY
JUNE 1, 1916

Christians are bound now and at all times to acknowledge; yet notwithstanding that many worthy deeds have beene done by you, great danger and feare doe still attend us, & will, as long as Popish Lords & superstitious Bishops are suffered to have their voice in the House of Peeres, & that accursed and abhominable Idoll of the Masse suffered in the Kingdome, and that Arch-enemy of our prosperity and Reformation lyeth in the Tower yet not receiving his deserved punishment.

All these under correction, gives us a great cause to suspect, that God is angry with us, and to be the chiefe causes why your pious indeavours for a further Reformation proceedeth not with that successe as you desire, and is most earnestly prayed for of all that wish well to true Religion, and the florishing estate both of King and Kingdome, the insolencies of the Papists and their abbettors, raiseth a just feare and suspition of sowing sedition, and breaking out into bloody persecution in this Kingdom, as they have don in *Ireland*, the thoughts of which sad and barbarous events, maketh our tender hearts to melt within us, forcing us humbly to Petition to this honourable Assembly, to make safe provision for your selves and us, before it be too late.

And whereas we, whose hearts have joyned cheerefully with all those Petitions which have beene exhibited unto you in the behalfe of the purity of Religion, and the liberty of our Husbands, persons, and estates, recounting our selves to have an interest in the common priviledges with them, doe with the same confidence assure our selves to find the same gracious acceptance with you, for easing of those grievances, which in regard of our female condition, do more neerly concerne

us, and doe deeply terrifie our soules: our Domesticall dangers with which this Kingdome is so much distracted, especially growing on us from those treacherous and wicked attempts already are such, as we find our selves to have as deepe a share as any others.

We cannot but tremble at the very thoughts of the horid and hideous facts which modesty forbids us now to name occasioned by the bloody Warres in *Germany*, his Majesties late Northerne Army, how often did it affright our hearts, whilst their violence began to break out so furiously upon the persons of those, whose Husbands or Parents were not able to rescue: wee wish we had no cause to speake of those insolencies, and savage usage and unheard of rapes, exercised upon our Sex in *Ireland*, and have we not just cause to feare they wil prove the fore-runners of our ruine, except Almighty God by the wisdome and care of this Parliament be pleased to succor us, our Husbands and children, which are as deere and tender unto us, as the lives and blood of our hearts, to see them murthered and mangled and cut in pieces before our eyes, to see our children dasht against the stones, and the Mothers milke mingled with the Infants blood, running down the streets; to see our Houses on flaming fire over our heads: oh how dreadfull would this be! wee thought it misery enough (though nothing to that we have just cause to feare) but few yeares since for some of our Sex, by unjust divisions from their bosome comforts, to be rendred in a manner Widdowes; and the children Fatherlesse, Husbands were Imprisoned from the Society of their wives, even against the Lawes of God and Nature, and little Infants suffered in their Fathers banishments:

thousands

to fly from Episcopall persecutions into desert places amongst wild Beasts, there finding more favour then in their native soyle, and in the midst of all their sorrowes, such hath the pity of the Prelates beene, that our cryes could never enter into their eares or hearts, nor yet through multitudes of obstructions could never have accesse or come nigh to those Royall mercies of our most gracious Soveraigne, which we confidently hope, would have relieved us: but after all these pressures ended, we humbly signifie, that our present feares are, that unlesse the blood-thirsty faction of the Papists and Prelates be hindred in their designes, our selves here in *England* as well as they in *Ireland*, shall be exposed to that misery which is more intollerable then that which is already past, as namely to the rage not of men alone, but of Devils incarnate, (as we may so say) besides the thraldome of our soules and consciences in matters concerning God, which of all things are most deare unto us.

Now the remembrance of all these fearefull accidents aforementioned, doe strongly move us from the example of the woman of *Tekoa* to fall submissively at the feet of his Majestie, our dread Soveraigne, and cry *Help O King*, help O yee the noble Worthies now sitting in Parliament: And we humbly beseech you, that you will be a meanes to his Majestie and the House of Peeres, that they will be pleased to take our heart-breaking grievances into timely consideration, and adde strength and incouragement to your noble indeavours, and futher, that you would move his Majestie with our humble requests, that he would be graciously

Asa, to purge both the Court and Kingdome of that great Idolatrous Service of the Masse, which is tollerated in the Queenes Court, this sinne (as we conceiv) is able to draw downe a greater curse upon the whole Kingdome, then all your noble and pious indeavours can prevent, which was the cause that the good and pious King *Asa* would not suffer Idolatry in his owne Mother, whose example if it shall please his Majesties gracious goodnesse to follow, in putting downe Popery and Idolatry both in great and small, in Court and in the Kingdome throughout, to subdue the Papists and their abetters, and by taking away the power of the Prelats, whose government by long and wofull experience wee have found to be against the liberty of our conscience and the freedome of the Gospell, and the sincere profession and practise thereof, then shall our feares be removed, and we may expect that God will powre down his blessings in aboundance both upon his Majestie, and upon this Honourable Assembly, and upon the whole Land.

For which your new Petitioners
shall pray affectionatly &c.

The

The Reasons follow.

IT may be thought strange, and unbeseeming our sex to shew our selves by way of Petition to this Honourable Assembly; but the matter being rightly considered, of the right and interest we have in the common and publique cause of the Church, it will, as we conceive (under correction) be found a duty commanded and required.

First, because Christ hath purchased us as dear rate as he hath done Men, and therefore requireth the like obedience for the same mercy as of men.

Secondly, because in the free enjoyning of Christ in his own Laws, & a flourishing estate of the Church and common-wealth, consisteth the happinesse of women, as well as men.

Thirdly, because women are sharers in the common Calamities that accompany both Church and Common-Wealth, when oppression is exercised over the Church or Kingdome wherein they live, and an unlimited power hath been given to the Prelats, to exercise authority over the Consciences of Women, as well as men, Witnesse Newgate, Smithfield, and other places of persecution, wherein Women as well as Men, have felt the smart of their Fury.

Neither are we left without example in Scripture; for when the state of the Church, in the time of King *Ahasuerus*, was by the bloody enemies thereof sought to be utterly destroyed, we find that *Hester* the Queen, and her Maids fasted and prayed, and that *Hester* petitioned to the King, in the behalfe of the Church, and though she enterprized that duty with the hazard of her own life

life, being contrary to the law to appeare before the King before she were sent for, yet her love to the Church carryed her thorow all difficulties, to the performance of that duty.

On which grounds we are imboldned to present our humble Petition unto this Honourable Assembly, not weighting the reproaches which may and are by many cast upon us, who (doe well weighing the premisses) scoffe and deride our good intent. We doe it not out of any selfe conceit, or pride of heart, as seeking to equall our selves with men, either in Authority or wisdome: But according to our places to discharge that duty we owe to God, and the cause of the Church, as farre as lyeth in us, following herein the example of the Men, which have gone in this duty before us.

A Relation of the manner how it was delivered, with their answer sent by Mr. Pym.

THis petition, with their Reasons, was delivered the 4th of Feb. 1641. by Mrs Anne Stagg, a Gentlewoman, and Brewers wife, and many others with her of like ranke and quality, which when they had delivered, after some time spent in reading of it, the Honourable assembly sent them an answer by M. Pym, which was performed in this manner.

M. Pym came to the Commons doore, and called for the Women, and spake unto them in these words, Good women, your petition and the Reasons have bin read in the House, and is thankfully accepted of, and is come in a seasonable time, you shall (God willing) receive from us all the satisfaction which we can possibly give to your just and lawfull desires. We intreat you to repaire to your Houses, and turne your Petition which you have delivered here, into Prayers at home for us; for we have bin, are, and shall be (to our utmost power) ready to relieve you, your Husbands and Children, and to performe the trust committed unto us, towards God, our King and Countrey, as becometh faithfull Christians and Loyall Subjects.

FINIS.